

UNIT-4

Organisational Power and Politics

Concept

1. Organizational Power

- Power is the the ability to exert influence beyond authority. Power can be acquired both through organizational as well as individual sources. In the organizations power can be derived through the virtue of one's position in the organization.
- Power is the ability to influence the outcome of events. It involves bringing about an action by someone against the will or desire of another. Other responses to influence can be in the form of resistance, compliance and commitment.
- Not all in the organization possess power. It lies with specific people and is exercised by them only in certain circumstances.
- Power is the function of dependence. If someone's dependence is high on you, higher is the power that you exert on them.
- Power can expand or contract. People having power will always be seeking opportunities to expand power, which they achieve with achieving position with higher authority.

2. Organizational Politics

- Essentially, this type of politics focuses on the use of power to affect decision making in an organization, or on self-serving and organizationally unsanctioned behaviors.
- Political behavior in organizations consists of activities that are not required as part of an individual's formal role but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization.
- Base of politics is disagreement, and disagreement is prompted by diversity in thinking, in culture, in departments and in goals.

Sources of Power

Power is the ability of an individual or a group to influence others. It is categorized into two main types: **Formal Power** and **Personal Power**.

1. Formal Power

Formal power is derived from an individual's position within an organization. It typically involves organizational authority or access to rewards and punishments.

a. Coercive Power

- **Definition:** Based on fear of the consequences for non-compliance.
- **Mechanism:** Utilizes threats or actual sanctions, such as physical punishment, dismissal, suspension, demotion, or assigning undesirable tasks.
- **Example:** A manager withholding critical information or assigning unfavorable shifts.

b. Reward Power

- **Definition:** Power based on the ability to provide positive rewards.
- **Mechanism:** Individuals comply to gain financial or non-financial benefits, such as bonuses, promotions, or recognition.
- **Example:** A leader who allocates salary raises or interesting projects to motivate team members.

c. Legitimate Power

- **Definition:** Power derived from an individual's position and authority within an organizational structure.
- **Mechanism:** Based on a formal hierarchy where individuals accept the authority tied to specific roles.
- **Example:** A school principal giving directives to teachers or a captain instructing soldiers.

2. Personal Power

Personal power comes from an individual's unique characteristics and does not rely on formal organizational roles. It typically involves influence through personal traits, skills, or relationships.

a. Expert Power

- **Definition:** Derived from knowledge, expertise, or specialized skills that others depend on.
- **Mechanism:** As organizations and jobs become more specialized, reliance on experts increases.
- **Example:** Following a physician's advice or a software engineer providing critical technical insights.

b. Referent Power

- **Definition:** Based on identification, respect, or admiration for a person.
- **Mechanism:** People comply because they aspire to be like or please the individual with referent power.
- **Example:** Celebrities like LeBron James or Tom Brady endorsing products influence consumer decisions due to their charisma and likability.

Tactics to gain power in Organizations

Power within an organization is cultivated through deliberate efforts and influence over others. Influence is rooted in **trust**, and trust can be built using various **influence tactics**. These tactics shape how individuals gain compliance, support, and alignment with their objectives.

Nine Influence Tactics

1. Legitimizing Power:

- a. **Definition:** Influence is based on authority, rules, and regulations.
- b. **Purpose:** Aligns individuals with organizational direction without necessarily motivating them.
- c. **Example:** A manager implementing a company policy requiring mandatory attendance.

2. Rational Persuasion:

- a. **Definition:** Using facts, data, and logical arguments to convince others.
- b. **Usage:** Most commonly employed tactic.
- c. **Example:** Presenting a detailed cost-benefit analysis to gain approval for a project.

3. Inspirational Appeals:

- a. **Definition:** Tapping into emotions, values, and beliefs to inspire action.
- b. **Example:** Subhash Chandra Bose's famous call, "You give me blood, and I will give you freedom," motivated citizens to join the freedom struggle.
- c. **Characteristics:** Authenticity and enthusiasm enhance effectiveness.

4. Consultation:

- a. **Definition:** Involving others in decision-making to increase their engagement and commitment.
- b. **Effective When:** Used in democratic or participative cultures.
- c. **Example:** Seeking input from team members on a new work schedule.

5. Exchange:

- a. **Definition:** Offering rewards or favors in return for compliance.
- b. **Example:** "If you complete this task on time, I'll recommend you for a promotion."
- c. **Psychological Basis:** Reciprocity principle as described by Cialdini (2000).

6. Personal Appeals:

- a. **Definition:** Gaining compliance based on friendship or loyalty.
- b. **Example:** A colleague asking for a favor based on shared trust and rapport.

7. Ingratiation:

- a. **Definition:** Using flattery or praise to create goodwill before making a request.
- b. **Example:** Complimenting a manager's leadership skills before asking for a deadline extension.
- c. **Effectiveness:** Depends on sincerity and intention.

8. Pressure:

- a. **Definition:** Using warnings, repeated demands, or threats to compel action.

- b. **Effective When:** Applied in crisis situations or emergencies.
 - c. **Example:** A manager setting strict consequences for failing to meet deadlines.
 - d. **Limitations:** Can backfire if overused, leading to resistance or resentment.
9. **Coalitions:**
- a. **Definition:** Leveraging a group's collective influence to achieve a goal.
 - b. **Example:** Trade unions organizing strikes to demand better working conditions.

The success of these tactics largely depends on the context and the audience. Some key considerations include:

- **Highly Interested Audience:** Rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation are the most effective tactics for engaged individuals.
- **Crisis Situations:** Pressure tactics may be necessary but should be used cautiously.
- **Combining Tactics:** Using multiple tactics together (e.g., rational persuasion and consultation) increases the likelihood of success.

Nature of organisational politics

Characteristics of Organizational Politics

1. **Driven by Self-Interest:**
 - a. Organizational politics often stems from individuals prioritizing their personal goals over organizational objectives. Examples include lobbying for promotions, securing resources, or influencing decision-making processes.
2. **Unwritten Rules:**
 - a. Politics operates beyond formal organizational structures and involves informal, unwritten norms and power plays.
3. **Ambiguity and Uncertainty:**
 - a. Political behavior thrives in situations where roles, responsibilities, and outcomes are unclear. Ambiguity creates opportunities for individuals to influence decisions or outcomes in their favor.
4. **Influence as the Core:**
 - a. The essence of politics lies in influencing others to align with one's goals, often using tactics like persuasion, networking, or coalition building.
5. **Power Dynamics:**
 - a. Political behavior is closely tied to the distribution and exercise of power within the organization. Individuals leverage formal authority, expertise, or personal charisma to achieve their objectives.
6. **Interpersonal and Intergroup Nature:**
 - a. Politics is not confined to individuals; it also involves groups vying for resources, recognition, or influence.
7. **Both Constructive and Destructive:**
 - a. While often viewed negatively, organizational politics can have constructive aspects, such as fostering innovation, pushing for necessary change, or resolving conflicts. However, it can also lead to unethical behavior, reduced morale, and a toxic work environment.

Factors Influencing Organizational Politics

1. **Scarcity of Resources:**
 - a. Limited resources like budgets, promotions, or project approvals drive competition and political behavior.
2. **Diverse Interests:**
 - a. Differing priorities and goals among individuals or departments create a fertile ground for politics.
3. **Ambiguity in Decision-Making:**
 - a. Lack of clarity in processes or criteria for rewards and recognition increases political maneuvering.
4. **Organizational Structure:**
 - a. Highly hierarchical organizations or those with centralized decision-making tend to foster more politics.

5. Personal Traits:

- a. Individuals with high self-monitoring, need for power, or Machiavellian tendencies are more likely to engage in politics.

Impact of Organizational Politics

1. Positive Impact:

- a. Encourages creative problem-solving and innovation.
- b. Helps individuals navigate complex organizational dynamics.
- c. Can bring attention to critical issues that require action.

2. Negative Impact:

- a. Reduces job satisfaction and morale.
- b. Promotes a culture of mistrust and resentment.
- c. Distracts from organizational goals and priorities.

Managing Organizational Politics

To minimize the negative effects and leverage the positive aspects:

1. Establish Clear Policies:

Transparent decision-making processes reduce ambiguity and unfair practices.

2. Foster Open Communication:

Encouraging honest dialogue minimizes misunderstandings and political behavior.

3. Reward Collaboration:

Promoting teamwork over individual gains helps reduce competition.

4. Develop Ethical Leadership:

Leaders who model integrity and fairness discourage negative political behavior.

Conflict

Concept

Conflict is an inevitable and natural part of organizational life, arising whenever individuals or groups with differing interests, values, or perceptions interact. It manifests when there are disagreements over goals, resource allocations, responsibilities, or approaches. While conflict is often viewed negatively, it can also stimulate innovation, encourage critical thinking, and enhance decision-making when managed effectively.

Key points include:

- Conflict is **universal**, occurring at all levels of interaction (individual, group, or organizational).
- If unresolved, conflict escalates into disputes that can harm workplace harmony and productivity.
- Organizations benefit from fostering a culture where diverse opinions are respected and discussed in a constructive manner.

Example: In a team project, conflict might arise when team members have differing ideas about the project's direction. Resolving this conflict through open discussion can lead to a more creative and effective approach.

Sources

Conflicts in organizations can originate from a variety of causes, ranging from interpersonal issues to structural and organizational problems. Here are detailed explanations of key sources:

1. Perceived Breach of Faith and Trust:

Conflict often arises when trust is broken. For example, if a manager promises an employee a promotion for

completing a project but later denies it, this breach of faith can lead to resentment and conflict. Trust is essential for maintaining confidence and reducing emotional tensions.

2. Unresolved Disagreements:

Disagreements are a natural part of working in an interdependent environment. When disagreements are ignored or unresolved, they tend to escalate. For instance, if two colleagues have differing views on project priorities and no resolution is sought, it could lead to hostility and inefficiency.

3. Miscommunication:

Clear and effective communication is vital to avoid misunderstandings. Miscommunication—such as unclear instructions, incomplete information, or assumptions—often aggravates conflicts. For example, an ambiguous email about project deadlines may lead to confusion and arguments among team members.

4. Personality Clashes:

Differences in personality traits, such as introversion versus extroversion or assertiveness versus passivity, can cause friction between individuals. Personality clashes often occur because people have different ways of approaching problems and interacting with others.

5. Differences in Acquired Values:

Values are deeply ingrained beliefs developed through upbringing, education, and experiences. When individuals have conflicting values—such as differing views on ethical practices or work-life balance—it can create tension. For example, an employee who values strict punctuality might clash with a colleague who is more relaxed about deadlines.

6. Underlying Stress and Tension:

In high-pressure environments, stress can exacerbate even minor disagreements. Employees under stress are more likely to react emotionally or irrationally, turning small issues into larger conflicts.

7. Ego Problems:

Egos play a significant role in conflict. When individuals prioritize their pride over resolving issues, conflicts become difficult to manage. A manager insisting on their idea despite evidence to the contrary is an example of ego-driven conflict.

Types

- **Functional (Constructive) Conflict:**

This type of conflict is beneficial as it encourages diverse perspectives, constructive competition, and innovative solutions. For example, a brainstorming session where team members debate different approaches to a project is a functional conflict that improves the final outcome.

- **Dysfunctional (Destructive) Conflict:**

When disagreements become personal and disrespectful, they create rivalry and hostility, leading to an unhealthy work environment. For instance, an argument between two employees that escalates into insults and reduces team morale is dysfunctional conflict.

Stages of conflict

a. Potential Opposition or Incompatibility:

Conflict begins at this latent stage, where underlying tensions such as unclear roles or communication barriers create opportunities for disagreement.

b. Cognition and Personalization:

At this stage, conflict becomes noticeable, and the involved parties perceive and feel the tension. Personalization occurs when emotions are attached to the conflict.

c. Intentions:

Intentions represent the strategies individuals or groups adopt to address the conflict. These can include competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, or compromising.

d. Behavior:

At this stage, the conflict manifests through actions, whether in the form of open arguments or subtle resistance.

e. **Outcomes:**

The conflict can result in:

- **Functional Outcomes:** Improved decision-making or problem-solving.
- **Dysfunctional Outcomes:** Reduced performance, morale, and workplace harmony.

Management of conflict

Effective conflict management ensures that disagreements lead to positive outcomes rather than disruption. It involves both **preventive measures** and **curative strategies**:

a. **Preventive Measures:**

- **Establishing Common Goals:** Encouraging collaboration by aligning individual goals with organizational objectives.
- **Building Trust and Communication:** Open channels of communication reduce misunderstandings and foster trust.
- **Role Clarity:** Clearly defined responsibilities minimize confusion and overlapping duties.
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring equitable distribution of resources avoids unnecessary disputes.

b. **Conflict Management Styles:**

- **Collaboration:** A win-win approach where both parties work together to find mutually beneficial solutions.
- **Competition:** A firm approach suitable for urgent or critical situations.
- **Compromise:** Both parties concede some demands to reach an acceptable resolution.
- **Accommodation:** One party yields to maintain harmony, often in situations where the issue is trivial for them.
- **Avoidance:** Conflict is temporarily ignored, suitable for minor issues or when emotions need to cool.

c. **Curative Steps for Conflict Resolution:**

- **Identify the Source:** Gather information to diagnose root causes.
- **Understand the Context:** Delve deeper into the underlying issues rather than addressing only immediate symptoms.
- **Request Solutions:** Encourage all parties to propose resolutions.
- **Evaluate Solutions:** Highlight the benefits and drawbacks of each option.
- **Implement the Solution:** Choose and apply the best resolution that satisfies all parties.

Well-being at Work

Well-being at work refers to a holistic state where employees feel physically, emotionally, and mentally balanced. It encompasses a positive work environment, job satisfaction, and the ability to manage stress effectively. Well-being directly influences productivity, employee engagement, and organizational success.

Key Elements of Well-Being:

1. **Physical Health:** Adequate work-life balance and support for health initiatives.
2. **Mental Health:** Addressing workplace stressors and providing psychological support.
3. **Social Connections:** Encouraging meaningful workplace relationships.
4. **Work Environment:** Providing job security, fair policies, and an inclusive culture

Importance

1. **Job Satisfaction and Motivation:** Positive emotions, such as enthusiasm and joy, lead to higher job satisfaction and motivation. Employees who feel emotionally connected to their work are more likely to be committed and engaged.
2. **Stress and Burnout:** Negative emotions like frustration, anxiety, and anger can lead to stress, which may result in burnout. Stress impacts physical and mental health, reducing productivity and increasing absenteeism.

3. **Creativity and Innovation:** A positive emotional climate fosters creativity. Employees who feel supported and valued are more likely to take risks and come up with innovative solutions.
4. **Conflict Resolution:** Emotions often underpin workplace conflicts. Understanding emotional triggers and reactions helps in resolving disagreements effectively and fostering a collaborative work environment.

Impact of Employee Emotions and Emotional Intelligence in Organizations

1. **Improved Productivity:** A workforce that is emotionally balanced and emotionally intelligent is more likely to perform at higher levels, work efficiently, and meet deadlines without unnecessary stress.
2. **Enhanced Collaboration:** When employees are emotionally intelligent, they collaborate more effectively. Good communication, mutual respect, and understanding lead to more effective teamwork and better outcomes for projects.
3. **Reduced Turnover:** Organizations that foster emotional well-being are likely to experience lower turnover rates. Employees who feel emotionally supported are more likely to stay loyal to the organization.
4. **Leadership Effectiveness:** Leaders with high emotional intelligence are more successful in managing teams, inspiring their staff, and making informed decisions. Their ability to read the emotions of their teams helps in providing the right support and guidance.
5. **Organizational Culture:** EI and emotional well-being shape the overall culture of an organization. A positive emotional climate encourages a culture of respect, inclusivity, and mutual support, making the organization a more desirable place to work.

Work stress and its management

Work stress is a prevalent issue that arises when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to manage them effectively. It is not only a personal challenge but also a significant organizational concern, as it affects employee well-being and productivity. Below is an in-depth exploration of its causes, consequences, and management strategies.

Causes of Work Stress

Work stress stems from various organizational, social, and personal factors:

1. **Job Demands**
 - a. Excessive workloads, tight deadlines, and complex tasks are major contributors.
 - b. Employees may feel overwhelmed when expectations are consistently high without adequate resources or support.
2. **Lack of Control**
 - a. Jobs that offer little autonomy or decision-making authority can make employees feel powerless, leading to frustration and stress.
3. **Role Ambiguity and Conflict**
 - a. When job roles are unclear, employees may struggle to understand their responsibilities, creating confusion and stress.
 - b. Conflicting demands from different stakeholders exacerbate this issue.
4. **Interpersonal Conflicts**
 - a. Poor relationships with colleagues, managers, or clients, coupled with a lack of effective communication, can lead to workplace tension and stress.
5. **Organizational Culture**
 - a. A toxic work environment with inadequate support, unfair practices, or favoritism can amplify stress levels.
 - b. A culture that prioritizes results over employee well-being creates burnout.
6. **External Factors**

- a. Issues like economic pressures, long commutes, or family responsibilities outside work can spill over, intensifying stress.

Consequences of Work Stress

The impact of work stress manifests at multiple levels:

Physical Health Effects

- **Short-Term:** Headaches, fatigue, or digestive problems.
- **Long-Term:** Increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, or weakened immunity.

Mental and Emotional Health Effects

- Heightened anxiety and depression.
- Emotional exhaustion leading to burnout.
- Decreased self-esteem and increased feelings of helplessness.

Workplace Outcomes

- **Reduced Productivity:** Stress hampers focus, creativity, and decision-making.
- **Absenteeism:** Employees may take frequent sick leaves to recover.
- **Turnover:** High stress levels can lead to resignation, increasing recruitment and training costs for organizations.

Managing Work Stress

Addressing work stress requires a combination of personal coping strategies and organizational interventions.

Individual Strategies

1. **Time Management**
 - a. Plan and prioritize tasks using tools like to-do lists or planners.
 - b. Break tasks into manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
2. **Developing Resilience**
 - a. Focus on building mental toughness through self-reflection and adaptive coping techniques.
 - b. Accept and adapt to changes positively.
3. **Healthy Lifestyle Choices**
 - a. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep are foundational to managing stress.
 - b. Limit caffeine and alcohol, which can aggravate stress symptoms.
4. **Relaxation and Mindfulness Techniques**
 - a. Practice yoga, meditation, or deep breathing to calm the mind and body.
 - b. Engage in hobbies or activities that promote relaxation, such as reading or painting.
5. **Building Support Networks**
 - a. Share concerns with trusted colleagues, friends, or family.
 - b. Seek professional help when stress becomes unmanageable.

Organizational Strategies

1. **Define Clear Roles and Expectations**
 - a. Clearly communicate job responsibilities and performance expectations to reduce ambiguity.
 - b. Ensure that employees have access to training and resources to meet these expectations.
2. **Workload Balancing**
 - a. Distribute tasks equitably among team members to avoid overburdening individuals.
 - b. Adjust workloads during high-demand periods to maintain morale and productivity.

3. Promote Positive Workplace Culture

- a. Foster a supportive environment that encourages collaboration and recognition.
- b. Implement policies that promote fairness and inclusivity.

4. Encourage Open Communication

- a. Managers should establish channels where employees feel safe to discuss challenges without fear of judgment or retaliation.
- b. Regular feedback and one-on-one meetings can help address stress-related issues early.

5. Provide Wellness Programs

- a. Offer resources like stress-management workshops, counseling, or Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).
- b. Encourage participation in health-focused initiatives such as gym memberships or wellness challenges.

6. Flexible Work Arrangements

- a. Introduce options like remote working, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks to accommodate individual needs.
- b. Allow employees to better balance work and personal life, reducing stress.